

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2005

**EMBRYONIC STEM CELLS HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO HELP
AMERICANS WHO ARE SUFFERING FROM**

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Dear Colleague:

This is the third in a series of Dear Colleagues that we are sending to provide you and your staff with information about the promise of embryonic stem cell research. Scientists believe that 100 million Americans may one day be cured of or treated for their debilitating disease through discoveries and treatments made through embryonic stem cell research.

One group of American patients who may benefit from stem cell research is children with developmental disabilities. Approximately 5 million children and adolescents suffer from one or more developmental conditions, such as: cerebral palsy, epilepsy, Tay-Sachs disease, Rett syndrome, leukodystrophy, and pediatric stroke.

Each of these disorders impairs the patient's cognition, speech, self-care and physical health, reducing the person's quality of life and costing the United States health system billions of dollars per year. We know so little about to treat these impairing diseases. Stem cell research has the potential to save lives and money by discovering cures and therapies for developmental disabilities:

Basic Research – Embryonic stem cells will allow developmental disability researchers to test the efficacy and safety of new drugs without human involvement. The stem cell line research may provide the exact model of an organ or tissue for research without compromising the health of these young patients.

Cell Therapy – Embryonic stem cells may allow scientists to replace nerve fibers damaged by these developmental diseases. Recent evidence has shown that stem cells have the ability to target damaged tissue cells and repair damaged areas.

To learn more about the promise of embryonic stem cell research or to cosponsor our legislation, H.R. 810, the "Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act," please contact Elizabeth Wenk with Rep. Castle (5-4165) or Meghan Taira with Rep. DeGette (5-4431) or visit our stem cell website at: <http://www.house.gov/castle/Castle%20DeGette%20ESCR.html>.

Sincerely,



Michael Castle
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress